

SIEC Briefing Paper on the Spectrum Coalition

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Description

The Spectrum Coalition for Public Safety is a national coalition of cities, states, and public safety associations organized to secure additional spectrum in the 700 MHz range to support critical public safety wireless applications. This effort is consistent with a recommendation made by the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee (PSWAC) report, dated September 1996.

During the December 11, 2003 meeting of the SIEC, the Committee unanimously approved joining the Spectrum Coalition.

Recommendations to the Committee

This is a status report only and requires no action by the SIEC.

Status

- On December 13, 2003, Chief Ronal Serpas acting for the SIEC signed a Memorandum of Agreement to join the Spectrum Coalition.
- The SIEC Committee agreed upon the wording of a letter that will be sent to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recommending that they take immediate action in support of the Consensus Plan and the Spectrum Coalition. That letter will be co-signed by the new Chair of the SIEC upon appointment and the Vice-Chair of the SIEC.

Issues

The Spectrum Coalition is asking Congress to enact legislation to mandate the Federal Communications Commission to:

- Stop the pending auctions of the upper portion of the 700 MHz band.
- Allocate 10 MHz of the 700 MHz band to public safety and homeland security use for broadband applications.
- Mandate the broadcasters (who must already relocate) do so by a date certain – December 31, 2006 or earlier.
- Promote the implementation of technologies that fully satisfy a series of open-standards technical requirements.

Background

Public Safety Communication require additional spectrum to carry out their primary function—to save lives and to protect property. Unfortunately, current networks or spectrum allocations do not provide sufficient bandwidth to enable critical high-speed next generation public safety technology. Significant network improvements and spectrum allocations are needed.

There is a solution – allocation by the FCC of at least 10 additional MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz range to be use specifically for public safety services. The window of opportunity for this solution is closing rapidly as the FCC currently plans the auction of the remaining 700 MHz block of spectrum to commercial interests.

Federal Communication Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Sir:

On December 11, 2003, the State of Washington State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) endorsed the work of the Spectrum Coalition by signing a Memorandum of Support. Additionally, the SIEC moved to forward the issues surrounding the Spectrum Coalition to the Washington State Information Services Board.

It is also important to understand that the State of Washington SIEC has previously endorsed the Consensus Plan (as proposed by APCO, Nextel and others) for re-allocation in the 800 MHz band.

The SIEC is asking the Commission move expeditiously on both the Spectrum Coalition and the Consensus Plan. The Consensus Plan is important to the public safety community as it is linked to responder safety concerns arising out of interference in the 800 MHz band. We support the Spectrum Coalition because it advocates a halt to the auctioning the 700 MHz spectrum and prefers giving it to the public safety community of interest.

It is the firm belief of the Washington State SIEC that both issues require your immediate attention, as both issues serve the public interests.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair, Washington State SIEC

Vice-Chair, Washington SIEC